

9 AUG 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
THROUGH : Deputy Director (Intelligence)
SUBJECT : British Guiana Elections

1. The British Guiana legislative election of 21 August will be close and the outcome is hard to predict, but the probability is that Cheddi Jagan's People's Progressive Party (PPP) will win by a small majority. In any case, the PPP has placed members of the party hierarchy in relatively safe constituencies and will as a result have a disciplined bloc of legislators, including at least a few known communists.

2. By contrast, both the People's National Congress, (PNC--Burnham's Negro racialist party) and the United Force (UF--Brower D'Aguiar's multiracial collection of conservative businessmen and defectors from the PPP and PNC) would have troubles keeping their members in line regardless of how many seats they win. Depending on how the vote is split in the constituencies where the lists are cluttered by independents and candidates of the minor Guiana Independence Movement, the PNC might obtain a slight majority of the 35 seats. The



25X1

Approved For Release 2004/10/08 : CIA-RDP79S00427A000500040017-3

Approved For Release 2004/10/08 : CIA-RDP79S00427A000500040017-3

United Force is considered unlikely to obtain more than a few seats but is of crucial importance for the way in which its candidates draw votes away from PPP and PNC candidates.

3. Under the new constitution which went into effect in late July, London now has control over only defense and foreign affairs. The new legislature will be bicameral with a nominated 13-member Senate empowered to delay but not thwart the will of the Assembly--London's somewhat feeble attempt for a brake against extremism. Eight of the senators are appointed by the governor on the advice of the Premier, three in consultation with members of the legislative opposition, and two at his discretion. The President of the Senate would be selected by the senators themselves. Cheddi Jagan's wife, Janet, wants the job, and these provisions appear to guarantee that she will get it if the PPP wins.

4. The present Executive Council is to be replaced by a Council of Ministers consisting of the Premier--presumably the leader of the majority party--and up to nine other ministers of which one to three must be members of the Senate and the rest members of the Legislative Assembly. These are appointed by the governor on the advice of the Premier.

5. If the PPP wins a majority of the 35 seats in the legislature, Jagan is therefore likely to become Premier (he has already informally led the colonial government as Minister

of Trade and Industry) and his wife Janet (currently Minister of Labor, Health, and Housing) to become President of the Senate. A 43-year old East Indian dentist whose charm has won him considerable popular appeal, Jagan is probably a Communist. He publicly professes to be a socialist, but openly admires Castro's Cuba, equivocates when asked publicly if he is a communist

25X1

25X1

Although the British deposed and jailed him in 1953-54 for attempting to establish a Communist state, they now feel he has altered his Marxist convictions and insist that he is sufficiently an idealist to be vulnerable to aid and friendship offers from the West. Jagan has frequently visited the US, and has been friendly and appreciative of aid received. Jagan is widely credited with good intentions--his government has been one of the few in the area which is financially honest--but he is both impractical and weak on economics with the result that he starts schemes he cannot finish and has even been scolded publicly in the legislative council by his wife for crazy ideas.

6. The 40-year old, US-born Janet Jagan is not running for a seat, perhaps because the pre-nomination campaign stressed that she was a white foreigner not devoted to Guianese interests. The British feel she is very clever and one of the few competent

25X1

[redacted]

administrators in British Guiana. She has not accomplished anything spectacular as Minister of Labor, Health, and Housing, but her forte is party organization which she has maintained well. She is considered to have the final say regarding PPP membership and to be a more doctrinaire Communist than her husband [redacted]

25X1

[redacted] She appears capable of making interviewers think she is a sincere, charming woman if she chooses. She has two children but admits she ignores them and is more interested in party work.

7. The PPP candidates include old line PPP stalwarts, such as Present Minister of Natural Resources Benn, Minister of Community Development, Education and Police Rai, and Minister of Communications and Works Ram Karran--all of whom would probably retain their ministerial posts. Benn has caused considerable local comment over his proclivity for saying "you can stop tomorrow but not communism", and the others are probably also communists to some degree. None is particularly competent.

8. The people to watch are the young candidates; communists brought into party work by Janet since 1957 and now placed in safe seats. Perhaps the most important candidate for ministerial office is 31-year old Harvard-educated Ranji Chandisingh who was an active member of the British communist

party and formerly connected with Tass. Since 1958, Chandisingh has been editing the PPP's weekly Thunder which follows the standard communist line. Another to watch is Lawrence Mann, editor of the virulently anti-US new PPP monthly Young Guiana. A recent graduate of the University College of the West Indies, Mann is reportedly a communist and is one of the few Negroes the PPP has brought into the party in its effort to wean away Negro voters who normally vote PNC. Another in the Negro category is Communist John Holder who for the last few years has been supporting himself by singing folk songs in New York. Another probable young Communist is Thunder-columnist Moses Bhagwan who visited Peiping last year.

9. The PNC party leader, Lyndon Forbes Sampson Burnham (Forbes to his friends), will probably retain a seat in any case, as he is running in the heavily Negro Georgetown stronghold. Burnham had communist associations before he split with Jagan to win 1955 to form his own political party in 1956 [redacted]

[redacted] A lawyer by profession and the best speaker in Guiana, [redacted]

[redacted] His weekly paper has been the most vicious of all in campaign polemics--calling Janet Jagan "White Lady Jew", for example. His administrative

25X1

Approved For Release 2004/10/08 : CIA-RDP79S00427A000500040017-3

ability has not been tested but his party was only whipped into shape just before the election with some outside assistance and his egocentrism makes him unwilling to share leadership with others.

10. For the United Force, "Our Leader Peter" D'Aguiar will probably win at least his own seat. A firmly anti-Communist believer in Moral Rearmament,--a man of Portuguese extraction--D'Aguiar rose from the bottom to become a rich brewer. He appears to have good intentions but little political intuition or economic sense.

25X1


Acting Assistant Director
Current Intelligence

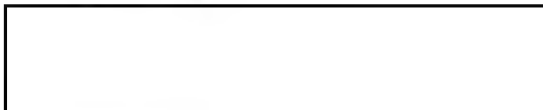
cc: DDCI

Distribution:

Orig & 1 - Addressee
1 - ER
1 - DDCI
1 - DDI
1 - AD/CI
✓ 1 - SIDO

25X1

AAD/OCI:



25X1

Approved For Release 2004/10/08 : CIA-RDP79S00427A000500040017-3